

KATHLEEN M. PETERSON  
1948–2003

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ABSTRACT

Kathleen M. Peterson (1948–2003) is remembered as a student, gifted teacher, skilled botanist, lawyer, and friend all as an introduction of a new species of *Scutellaria* (*Lamiaceae*) from Mexico named in her honor.

KEY WORDS: *Scutellaria*, *Lamiaceae*, Mexico, obituary

RESUMEN

Kathleen M. Peterson (1948–2003) es recordada como una estudiante, profesora con talento, botánica de pericia, abogada, y amiga, todo como una introducción de una nueva especie de *Scutellaria* (*Lamiaceae*) de México nombrada en su honor.

The notice in the Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, paper, the *Patriot-News*, published on November 26, 2003 was short: "Kathleen M. Peterson, 55, of Camp Hill, died Monday, November 24, 2003 at Hospice of Central Pennsylvania, Carolyn Croxton Slane Residence. She was an attorney for the Pennsylvania Treasury Department. Services will be held at the convenience of the family. Arrangements are by the Cremation Society of Pennsylvania, Harrisburg." Nothing was mentioned of the person or her life as a botanist; we hope our words and actions in proposing *Scutellaria petersoniae* (Turner & Reveal 2004) in some way, will rectify the oversight for it is with sadness that we note to the botanical community the passing of Kathy Margaret Peterson.

Kathy Peterson was a graduate student at the University of Maryland from 1973 until 1978, where she received her doctoral degree, working on a portion of the mint genus *Salvia*. Her master's thesis was done with Dr. Willard Payne (The genus *Hymenoclea* (*Compositae: Ambrosiaceae*), *Brittonia* 25:243–256. 1973) at the University of Illinois (1969–1971) where she took her undergraduate degree in 1969. The two of them also published "Observations of the hypodermises of ferns" in the *American Fern Journal* (63:34–42. 1973). Based on her work at Maryland, she published "*Salvia reptans*. *Labiatae*" with Raymond M. Harley of the Royal Botanical Garden, Kew, England, in *Curtis's Botanical Magazine*

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(182:13-16.1978). As in all papers published in that journal, their comments were accompanied by a beautiful, full-page colored painting of the species.

Her research on *Salvia* was supported by a grant from the National Geographic Society and a Doctoral Dissertation Improvement Grant from the National Science Foundation. Together, she and Reveal presented a report entitled "Biosystematic and evolutionary studies of *Salvia* subgenus *Calosphace*" that was published in the Society's *Research Reports* (15:557-564. 1983). Of a more personal nature was an article of their travels in Mexico ("Exploring the green frontier" by Broome, Reveal and Peterson published in the *University of Maryland's Graduate School Chronicle* 10(4):3-6. 1977). C. Rose Broome and Kathy spent a month collecting prior to being joined by Reveal and Harley at the silver mining town of Toluca. Together they explored a portion of Guerrero that had not been visited botanically for several decades. The new finds were numerous. Among them were *Bouvardia hintoniorum*, *Galium iltisii*, *Hansteinia harleyi*, *Montanoa revealii*, *Salvia turneri*, *Sinclairia broomcae*, *Tibouchina patens*, and a new genus *Revealia*.

The most beautiful addition made during their joint trip across the Sierra Madre del Sur was a wonderful new species named *Utricularia petersoniae* by Peter Taylor (*Kew Bull.* 41:8.1986). It was a fitting tribute to Kathy, tall and slender yet graceful with an elegant beauty.

Kathy was born in Oak Park, Illinois, on March 10, 1948. Here she spent her youth, attending local grade and high schools before entering the University of Illinois in 1965. There she majored in botany with minors in chemistry and geology. As a youngster she was tall, taller than most boys her age, and this would continue to be the case throughout her life. She had elegance about her, borne by her height so that in the classroom she was a presence. At Maryland she tutored struggling athletes, and was most effective as she could intimidate the largest football player and look many a basketball player in the eye. Her wit was appreciated but her strength was as a teacher. In 1978 she received the Carroll E. Cox award as the outstanding graduate student; during the 1978-1979 academic year she was appointed an instructor at College Park. She departed soon thereafter to accept a position as an assistant professor at the University of Montana. Her skill in the classroom continued, for Kathy taught a variety of classes and soon had a small group of students working on graduate degrees, being named "KP" to distinguish her from the other Kathys in the group. Augmented by grants from the National Science Foundation and National Geographic Society she continued her work on *Salvia*. Other funding allowed her and her students to work on various rare and endangered species in Montana. Among her students were Jeffrey Strachan now with the Plant Variety Protection Office, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Lisa Campbell of The New York Botanical Garden, Jennifer Ramstetter, a professor of biology at Marlboro College, and Kathy Ahlenslager of the U.S. Forest Service who wrote a recent obitu-

ary (Ahrensleger 2004). Perhaps her greatest contribution to the University of Montana came in the form of her effort to upgrade the herbarium by hiring a collections manager, finding volunteers to mount and file thousands of plant specimens, and to distribute a large backlog accumulated over the decades.

Professionally Kathy moved upward. Besides her teaching duties she directed the operations of the University's natural history museum, wrote several research papers, served on the editorial board of *Systematic Botany*, and was president of the University of Montana Sigma Xi chapter. In 1984 she was promoted to the rank of associate professor, and in 1986 she received tenure. Along with tenure the University awarded her a "meritorious teaching and research salary increase." Most of her publications at this time dealt with rare plant species in Montana. They include "Vascular plants of limited distribution in Montana" (Lesica, P., G. Moore, K.M. Peterson, and J.H. Rumley, *Montana Acad. Sci. Monogr.* 2:1-61. 1984) and a summary report on rare plants in the state (Peterson, K.M., P. Lesica & J.S. Shelly, *Proceedings of the 1986 Natural Areas Conference*, pp. 97-113).

Then, in 1987, she suddenly resigned her position, left Montana, and botany as well, all for what proved to be an unfortunate, short-lived marriage which ended formally in divorce in 1994.

Finding herself in Pennsylvania, Kathy began a new career. She was certified as a paralegal by Pennsylvania State University in March of 1989 and then attended The Dickinson School of Law where she was awarded her J.D. in 1992. During this time she was a member of the *Dickinson Law Review* and the Appellate Moot Court Board; she also served on the editorial board of the *Dickinson Journal of Environmental Law and Policy*. In the *Review* she published an article entitled "Federal regulation of artificial insemination donor screening practices: An opportunity for law to co-evolve with medicine," a title only a biologist would think of. Her interest initially was in environmental law, working as an intern for the Department of Environmental Resources (1991-1992) and as a law clerk for the state's Treasury Department. In August of 1992, two months before being admitted to the Pennsylvania Bar, she became the Assistant General Counsel for Treasury.

As a lawyer, Kathy drafted banking service contracts between the Treasury and banks, prepared white papers on State Workers' Insurance Fund and the Federal Reserve System, did general legal research on banking and ethics issues, and provided litigation support for the General Counsel. In September of 1995 she was promoted to the Department's Associate General Counsel. In this position, she represented the State Treasurer on various committees, including the Board of Directors of Pennsylvania's chapter of The Nature Conservancy.

In 1999, Kathy discovered that she had ovarian cancer. Initially the combination of chemotherapy and radiation was successful, and during most of this time she continued to serve the citizens of Pennsylvania. In 2001 her doctors



Kathleen M. Peterson (1948–2003).

found a lesion on the brain. It was removed surgically, and she returned to work determined to beat the newly found cancer. Two weeks after surgery she fell and a MRI found more lesions. A second round of surgery was performed, but her chances of survival were greatly diminished. Up to the end, Kathy was a strong, stalwart woman, loosing a battle to cancer that two and half years early claimed her brother, and months before her own death, took her mother. It is in Kathy's memory that we dedicate the following new species.

#### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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